BETWEEN YESTERDAY AND TODAY

- HASAN AL-BANNA

Between Yesterday and Today

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

Praise be to Allah, may He bless and save Our guide Muhammad, the victor and the Seal of all prophets, His family and his Companions.

The Message of the Faithful Prophet

Thirteen hundred and seventy years ago, Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah, the Illiterate Prophet, proclaimed in the heart of Mecca from Mount Al-Safa:

'O mankind, I am sent to you all as a messenger of Allah, to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: There is no god but He; it is He who gives life and brings about death. Therefore believe in Allah and His messenger, the Prophet can neither read or write, who believes in Allah and His Words, and follow him. So that you may be guided'

(Surat-al-A'raaf (7), ayah 158)

This universal mission marked the boundary for all of creation between a dark, oppressive past and a brilliant, shining future, as well as a prosperous and exuberant present A clear announcement of a new order decreed by Allah, the all knowing, the all Wise. Its herald was Mohammed, the bringer of glad tidings and a warner. Its Book was the clear and Enlightening Qur'an. Its soldiers were the vanguards of the Emigrants and the Ansar (helpers) and those who followed them in doing good. It was not contrived by man: it was rather a favour from Allah, for who is better than Allah in his favours?

'Thou didst not know what the Book was, nor the Faith, but We have made it a light through which We guide those whom We will of our worshippers. And truly thou dost guide to a straight path, the path of Allah to whom belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. Do not all things proceed to Allah?'

(Surat-ash-Shura (42), ayahs 52-53)

The Qur'anic Method for Social Reform

The Qur'an contains the principles of complete social reform. It was revealed to the Prophet (PBUH) and gradually declared to the Believers over time, depending on the fall of events, circumstances, and situations:

'In this manner, so that We may reinforce thy heart with it, and We have set it out in order. And they do not bring thee any similitude, but that we bring thee the truth, and a better one as exposition'

(Surat-al-Furqaan (25), ayahs 32-33)

This continued for some twenty two years until the revelation was complete, preserved within the hearts and written notes of men. Now Allah had gathered therein an explanation for everything concerning this Ummah and the bases for complete social reform. All of which may be summarised under these headings:

a) Godliness. (i.e everything that we do is for the sake of Allah alone)

b) The elevation of the human spirit.

c) The doctrine of reward and punishment.

d) The proclamation of the brotherhood of man.

e) Advancement for men and women together; the declaration of their joint responsibility and their equality: the precise definition of their respective duties.

f) The safeguarding of society by stipulating the right to life, property, work, health, freedom, education, and security for every member, and defining the legitimate sources of gain.

g) The control of the two instincts: the instinct of self preservation and the instinct of the preservation of the species; the regulation of the alimentary and sexual demands.

h) Severity in punishing cardinal crimes.

i) The confirmation of the unity of the Umma and condemnation of all the causes and symptoms of disunity.

j) The obligation of the Ummah to wage jihad to safeguard the principles of justice provided by this order.

k) valuing the state as an embodiment of the ideology, capable to defend itself, and responsible for fulfilling its aim within its own society as well as for conveying it to mankind as a whole.

The Practical Aspects of This System

This Qur'anic order stood in opposition to all other unchallenged systems and theoretical philosophies. It did not allow its principles and teachings to remain as theories in one's head, or ideas confined to books, or words not going further than the mouths of men. On the contrary, it instituted ways to establish them, to strengthen them, and draw profit from their effects and results. It compelled the Ummah which believed and owed allegiance to it, to guard their duties making them a must. Omission from these duties and giving in to whimsical desires is simply unacceptable. Indeed, it rewards the worker, and punishes the negligent, such that it removes him from the boundaries set by the Islamic society and casts him in to an abyss. The most important duties which this order has placed as a protective fence to establish its principles are the following:

a) Prayer, dhikr, repentance, duaa', etc.

b) Fasting, chastity, warning against luxury.

c) Zakah, alms giving, expenditure for benevolent purposes.

d) Pilgrimage, travel, journeying, discovery, and investigation of Allah ' s Kingdom .

e) Procurement, work, and the prohibition of begging.

f) Jihad, fighting, outfitting fighters, and caring for their families and interests after their departure.

g) Commanding the good and giving sound advice.

h) Forbidding evil, and intervention when it takes place and against its perpetrators.

i) The obtaining of education and knowledge by every male and female Muslim in the various disciplines of life, each one in what suits him best.

j) Sound manners and behaviour and assiduous cultivation of high moral values.

h) Striving for physical health and control of the senses.

k) Social responsibility of both the ruler and ruled, in social welfare and obedience.

A Muslim is compelled to fulfil these obligations and put them into practice as the Qur'anic order has set them out. He must not slacken in performing any of them, for they have all been specified in the Noble Qur'an, and have been unequivocally illustrated in the deeds of the Prophet (PBUH) his Companions and those who followed them in doing good, with simplicity and clarity. Every deed, establishes and affirms one or some of the principles cited above all of which came to benefit mankind by virtue of their results and effects.

The First Islamic State

On the foundation of this virtuous Qur'anic social order the first Islamic state arose, having unshakeable faith in it, meticulously applying it, and spreading it throughout the world, so that the first Khilafah used to say: *'If I should lose a camel's lead, I would find it in Allah's Book.'*. He fought those who refused to pay zakah, regarding them as apostates because they had overthrown one of the pillars of this order, saying: *'By Allah, if they refused me a lead which they would hand over to the Apostle of Allah (PBUH), I would fight them as soon as I have a sword in my hand!'* For unity, in all its meanings and manifestations, pervaded this new forthcoming nation. Complete social unity arose from making the Qur'anic order and it's language universal, while complete political unity was under the shadow of the Amir Al-Mumineen and beneath the standard of the Khilafah in the capital. The fact that the Islamic ideology was one of decentralisation of the armed forces, the state treasuries, and the

provincial governors proved to be no obstacle to this, since all acted according to a single creed and a unified and comprehensive control. The Qur'anic principles dispelled and laid to rest the superstitious idolatry prevalent in the Arabian Peninsula and Persia. They banished guileful Judaism and confined it to a narrow province, putting an end to its religious and political authority. They struggled with Christianity such that its influence was greatly diminished in the Asian and African continents, confined only to Europe under the guard of the Byzantine Empire in Constantinople. Thus the Islamic state became the centre of spiritual and political dominance within the two largest continents. This state persisted in its attacks against the third continent, assaulting Constantinople from the east and besieging it until the siege grew wearisome. Then it came at it from the west, plunging into Spain, with its victorious soldiers reaching the heart of France and penetrating as far as northern and southern Italy. It established an imposing state in Western Europe, radiant with science and knowledge. Afterwards, it ended the conquest of Constantinople itself and the confined Christianity within the restricted area of Central Europe. Islamic fleets ventured into the depths of the Mediterranean and Red seas, both became Islamic lakes. And so the armed forces of the Islamic state assumed supremacy of the seas both in the East and West, enjoying absolute mastery over land and sea. These Islamic nations had already combined and incorporated many things from other civilisations, but they triumphed through the strength of their faith and the solidness of their system over others. They Arabised them, or succeeded in doing so to a degree, and were able to sway them and convert them to the splendour, beauty and vitality of their language and religion. The Muslims were free to adopt anything beneficial from other civilisations, insofar as it did not have adverse effects on their social and political unity.

Factors leading to the Dissolution of the Islamic State.

For all the immense strength and extensive empire, the factors of disintegration began to infiltrate the very fibre of this Qur'anic nation Gradually becoming more serious, widespread and powerful, until they rent this fabric apart and brought the centralised Islamic state to an end in the sixth century after the Hijrah (the thirteenth century AD.) at the hands of the Tartars. In the fourteenth century after Hijrah (the twentieth century AD.) they did this a second time, leaving in their wake on both occasions disunited nations and small states aspiring toward unity and striving for resurgence. The most significant of these (disintegrating) factors were the following

a) Political differences, partisanship, and struggle for supremacy and prestige, despite the strict prohibition against this in Islam, which calls for indifference with respect to positions of power and being attracted to it, which is like a cancer within nations and the death blow for it's people:

'And contend not with one another, so that you become weak and your strength depart, and persevere, for Allah is with those who persevere.'

(Surat-al-Anfaal (8), ayah 46)

and despite the profound exhortations to remain faithful to Allah alone in speech and act, and to flee love of fame and praise.

b) Differences in religion and schools of thought, and turning away from religion in both beliefs and actions leading to dead works endowed with no spirit or life, accompanied by negligence towards Allah's Book and the Sunnah of the Apostle (PBUH) Leading to stagnation, fanaticism in thought and word, and a passion for disputation, controversy, and wrangling, All these were among the things Islam had warned against and forbidden most rigorously, so that the Apostle (PBUH) said:

'No people have ever fallen into error after receiving guidance except by falling into disputes.'

c) Self indulgence in luxuries and comforts, and craving for pleasure and sensual joys to the point that what has been recorded of Muslim rulers in many periods goes beyond anything recorded of others, and this despite what they read in of the Words of Allah (PBUH):

'And when We wish to destroy a city, We issue a command to its men of wealth, and they transgress therein, and so the Word against them is justified, and We destroy it utterly.'

(Surat-al-Israa' (17), ayah 16)

d) The transfer of authority to non Arabs; Persians at one time, at another, the Mamluks, Turks, and others who had never had a taste of genuine Islam, and whose hearts had never been illuminated with the light of the Qur'an because of the difficulty they encountered in trying to grasp its concepts, even though they read the Words of Allah (SWT):

‘O ye who believe! Do not take as confidants those who are not of you; they will not fail to cast disorder among you; they are pleased by what troubles you. Hatred has been revealed out of their mouths; what their hearts conceal is yet greater. We have made the signs clear to you, if you would but understand.’

(Surat-aal-Imran (3), ayah 118)

e) Indifference to the applied and natural sciences, all the while wasting time and loosing energy on abstruse, speculative philosophies and unhealthy, imaginary pseudo sciences, despite Islam's urging them to consider the universe, to explore the secrets of creation, and to travel about in the earth, for it commands them to contemplate the Kingdom of Allah:

‘Say: "Behold what is in the heavens and the earth."’

(Surat-Yunus (10), ayah 102)

f) Arrogance of the government regarding it’s authority, self deception as to it’s power, and a failure to look into the social evolution of the nations outside it’s fold, until such nations took the lead in preparation and equipment, eventually taking the Islamic state by surprise. But the Qur'an had commanded them to be alert, and had warned them about the consequences of negligence, regarding the negligent as cattle, nay, even more deluded:

‘For We have surely created for Jahannam many jinn and men, having hearts with which they discern not, having eyes with which they see not, having ears with which they hear not these are like cattle, nay, even more deluded; these are the heedless.’

(Surat-al-A’raaf (7), ayah 179)

g) Self deception through the charms of hostile flatterers, admiration for their actions and their apparent lifestyles, and blind imitation of them in what is harmful rather than beneficial, even though resembling them has been strictly prohibited while remaining different to them, preserving the basic elements of the Islamic Ummah, and warning about the consequences of this imitation are clear cut commands, to which effect the Noble Qur'an says:

‘O ye who believe! If you obey those who disbelieve, they will throw you back upon your heels, and you will be turned into losers.’

(Surat-aal-Imran (3), ayah 149)

Political Struggle

Assaults on the Islamic State

These factors began to operate within the substance of the Islamic state and the Ummah as a whole, suppressed nations thought that the time was ripe to take their revenge and bring to ruin the very Islamic state which had earlier conquered their lands and changed their entire way of life. The Tartars swept across the Islamic state like a devastating flood, tearing it apart piece by piece such that when they arrived at Baghdad, the capital of the ‘Abbasid Khilafah, they trampled it and disgraced the Khalifah , Al-Musta’sim. Thus the unity of the state and the knot of the Khilafah was undone for the first time. The nations fell apart into small states, every tribe having it’s own pulpit and an Amir Al-Mumineen. Europe saw the resurgence of Christianity, whose forces gathered and hurled back the Muslim East in both Asia and Africa through nine crusading assaults, in which the best of their cavalry, royalty, and arms were deployed. These invading forces were able to establish a Crusader state in Jerusalem, threatening the Islamic nations of the East and West, and attacking Egypt - the most

powerful of these states at that time.

Revival

But Allah (SWT) did not allow falsehood to vanquish truth. Egypt was able to draw together the scattered forces of some of these minor states, and hurl them at the necks of the Crusaders, under the leadership of Salah-ud-Din. It regained Jerusalem from the Christians, and showed them the meaning of defeat at Hitteen. Then Egypt stood in the face of the Tartars under the leadership of Alzahir Baybars, throwing them back on their heels, at Ayn Jalut, and restoring the lines of the Khilafah once again. It was the will of Allah that an Islamic state re-emerge, extensive in domain, bold in courage, and formidable in power, welding its people into one and uniting most of the Islamic nations under its banner. Its lofty ambitions meant that an attack on Christianity in its very lair was crucial. Thus It conquered Constantinople, and its authority extended to the heart of Europe reaching as far as Vienna. This came the state of the Ottoman Turks.

Fruits of the Renaissance in Europe

The Islamic state was tranquil under the banner and authority of the Ottomans, it remained passive was heedless of what was happening around it. But Europe, which had come into contact with the light of Islam in the West through Andalus, and in the East through the Crusades, wasted no opportunity and did not fail to benefit from these lessons. It began to build up and unite her forces under the banner of the Franks in the land of Gaul, where it was able to stem the tides of an onslaught against the Islamic West and sow dissension within the ranks of the Muslims in Andalus, employing people to fall upon others, until finally it drove them overseas back to the African coast. The young Spanish state took it's place, as Europe continued to build up it strength, to unite, to plan, to acquire knowledge, to traverse foreign lands, and to discover new countries, such that America was discovered by Spain and the route to India by Portugal. Cries for reform followed swiftly in each state within Europe. Numerous reformers arose, while natural science and fruitful, productive knowledge was eagerly embraced. The Reformation resulted in the creation of a number of nationalities and the rise of a strong state - it's sole purpose to dismember the Islamic state, which Europe had already shared among its nations and whose place it had taken control of in Asia and Africa. These young states formed alliances for this purpose, which at times rose to the level of sacred pacts

A New Attack

European power expanded, thanks to discoveries, expeditions, and travels to far and distant lands as far as many of the remote Islamic countries like India, as well some of the neighbouring Islamic provinces. Europe began to work earnestly at dismembering the powerful and far flung Islamic state proposing numerous plans toward this end, referring to them at times as 'the Eastern question' and at others as 'dividing up the inheritance of the Sick Man of Europe'. Every state began to seize any opportunity as it arose, adopting the flimsiest of excuses to attack the peaceful yet careless Islamic state, and to reduce its periphery or demolish parts of its integral fabric. This onslaught continued over a long period of time, during which the Ottoman Empire was stripped of much of it's Islamic territory which then fell under European domination, e.g., Morocco and North Africa. Many non Islamic areas previously under Ottoman rule became independent during this time, e.g., Greece and the Balkan states. The final round of this struggle was the First World War, from 1914 to 1918, which ended in the defeat of Turkey and her allies, providing a perfect opportunity for the strongest nations of Europe, (England and France, and under their patronage, Italy). They laid their hands on the huge legacy left behind by the Islamic nations, imposing their rule over them under the various titles of occupation, colonialism, trusteeship or mandate dividing them up in the following manner:

1) North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunis) became French colonies lying in between a zone of international influence in Tangier and a Spanish colony in the Reef.

2) Tripoli and Barca became Italian colonies in which Italy did not wish a single trace of Islam to remain. It forced Italian citizenship upon the people giving it the name of 'South Italy' and filling it with thousands of hungry families and wild beasts in human form (Italian outcasts).

3) Egypt and the Sudan fell under English authority, neither one possessing a shred of independent authority.

4) Palestine became an English colony, which England took the liberty of selling to the Jews so that they might

establish therein a national Zionist homeland.

5) Syria became a French colony.

6) Iraq became an English colony.

7) The Hijaz possessed a weak, unstable government dependent on charity and clinging to false treaties and worthless covenants.

8) Yemen possessed an outmoded government and a poverty stricken populace exposed to attack anywhere and at any time.

9) The remaining nations of the Arabian peninsula consisted of small emirates whose rulers lived under the wing of the British consuls and who fought one another for the crumbs falling from their tables, their souls burning with mutual resentment and hatred. This was the case despite the reassuring promises and binding treaties drawn up by the Allies with the mightiest monarch of the Peninsula, King Hussain, stating that they would help him achieve the Arab independence and support the authority of the Arab Khilafah.

10) Iran and the Afghanistan possessed shaky governments beset by power hungry people on every side, they would be under the wing of one nation at one time and under that of another at other times.

11) India was an English colony.

12) Turkestan and the adjoining regions were Russian colonies, subjected to the bitter harshness of the Bolshevik authorities.

Apart from these, there were also the Islamic minorities scattered across many countries, knowing no state to whose protection they might have recourse, nor any well armed government to defend their nationality, as the Muslims in Ethiopia, China, the Balkans, and the lands of Central, South, East and West Africa. Under such conditions, Europe won in the political struggle, and finally accomplished its goal in dismembering the Islamic empire, annihilating the Islamic state and erasing it politically, from the list of powerful, living nations.

Return to Power

However this flagrant hostility and contempt for treaties and covenants tormented men's hearts and aroused their spirits. These nations began to demand their independence and struggled to regain their freedom and glory. Towards this end, revolts flared up within their borders: Turkey revolted, Egypt revolted, Iraq and Syria revolted, while repeated revolts took place in Palestine and the Reef in Morocco. Every where people began to stir, and as a result the Islamic people regained some of their rights. Turkey became independent within her new frontiers, Egypt and Iraq were recognised as sovereign states, the Saudi state rose in the Hijaz and Najd, while, Yemen, Iran, and Afghanistan preserved their already existing independence, Syria came close to winning recognition of her independence. Palestine drew the attention of the world to itself through its struggle. The Muslims, without any doubt, took significant steps, even if they were few and slow, towards the noble goal of restoring their freedom and glory and rebuilding their state. With each nation demanding its right to freedom as an independent entity, concepts of localised nationalism arose, and many states working towards this revival purposely ignored the idea of unity. Without a doubt the outcome the of these steps will result in the consolidation and return of the Islamic empire as a unified state embracing the Muslims that have been scattered around the World, raising the banner of Islam and carrying its message. There is no nation in the world that is held together by linguistic unity, participation in material and spiritual interests, and similarity of suffering and hope in the same that the Muslims are.

A New War

The European nations emerged from the First World War with the seeds of rancour and hatred deeply implanted within many of them. The peace conference took place and the ensuing treaties were sharp slaps in the face to some and painfully, false expectations to many others; furthermore, many new concepts and ideologies, strongly fanatical, made their appearance. Such a situation will inevitably lead to renewed opposition and a terrible, devastating war which would tear these nations asunder and end their unity, bringing them back

to their senses and deterring them from injustice. It will give the Islamic nations another opportunity to straighten their ranks, to unite, and finally achieve their freedom and independence, thus regaining their state and their unity under the leadership of the Amir Al Mumineen:

'And We desired to show favour to those who had been rendered weak in the earth, and to make them leaders and make them inheritors.'

(Surat-al-Qasas (28), ayah 5).

Social Struggle

A New Civilisation

The European nations, which had socialised and had come into contact with Islam and Muslims (due to their Crusades in the East, and their proximity to the Arabs of Andalus in the West), not only benefited from this in terms of a heightened awareness, cohesion, and political unification; but also in terms of a great intellectual awakening, acquiring numerous sciences and branches of knowledge. A scientific and cultural Renaissance, vast in scope, made its appearance, and the Church with all the strength at its command rose to combat this strange phenomenon. It subjected their scholars and intellectuals to the most horrific punishments: the courts of The Inquisition waged war upon them and aroused the wrath of the people against them. But this accomplished nothing, its teachings could not stand up in front of scientific realities and discoveries. The scientific Renaissance emerged victorious, and the state thereby awoke and it too fought the Church until it completely delivered European society from Church authority. Its men were driven into the shrine and the cloister, the Pope was confined to the Vatican, and the work of the clergy was limited and their efforts were confined. Christianity remained in Europe, but only to serve as a historical heirloom. It was an instrument for educating the simple minded and naive among the masses, and a mechanism for conquest, colonisation, and the suppression of political aspirations. The domain of science stretched out before Europe, and the scope of invention and discovery broadened. The machine doubled production and industrialised life. All this preceded hand in hand with the rise of the strong state, whose authority reached out across many lands and regions. The world eagerly welcomed the European nations and chose them as it's sustainers. Wealth poured out from it in every direction. It was only natural then, that European life and culture should be based on excluding religion from all aspects of social life, especially the state, the law court, and the school; with a predominant materialistic outlook becoming the criterion for everything. As a result, the make-up of this civilisation became purely materialistic, demolishing what the revealed religions had advocated and utterly contradicting the principle of uniting the spiritual and the material which Islam had laid as the foundation of it's civilisation. Among the most important traits of European civilisation are the following:

1) Apostasy, doubt in Allah, denial of the soul, disregard as to reward or punishment in the world to come, and an obsession to limit themselves to only that which is material and tangible:

'They know something external of the life of this world, but of the world to come they are heedless '

(Surat-ar-Rum (30), ayah 7)

2) Lust, unseemly dedication to pleasure, new ways of self indulgence, uncontrolled freedom of the lower instincts and bodily desires, the equipment of women with every technique of seduction and incitement, and the drowning into wicked practices which shatter both mind and body, destroying the integrity of the family and threatening the happiness of the home:

'Those who disbelieve take their enjoyment and eat as cattle eat, and the Fire is their dwelling place.'

(Surat-Muhammad (47), ayah 12)

3) Individual greed, for every man wants any thing good only for himself; Greed also exists in the social strata, for each strata wants to gain the upper hand over the other and seeks to secure profits for itself. Finally there is greed on a national level, for each nation is prejudiced towards its own nationality, while looking down on all

others, and trying to engulf those who are weaker.

4) Usury, granting it legal recognition, regarding it as a principle of general transactions, and making it a general practice among nations and individuals.

These purely materialistic traits of European society have corrupted the spirit, devalued morality, and made them sluggish in the war against crime, all this and the problems have multiplied, destructive ideologies have made their appearance, devastating and damning revolutions have burst forth, economic, social, and political institutions no longer stand on firm foundations. Nations have been torn apart by sects and parties, while greed and hatred have driven people to cut each others' throats. This modern civilisation has substantiated its complete impotence in securing peace, tranquillity and safety within society. It has failed to grant happiness to man, despite all the doors of science, knowledge, wealth and opulence it has left open for them, and despite the power and authority it enjoys throughout the earth, and even though it has not been in existence for so much as a century.

The Tyranny of Materialism On Muslim Land

The Europeans worked assiduously in trying to immerse (the world) in materialism, with their corrupting traits and murderous germs, to overwhelm those Muslim lands that their hands stretched out to. Under their authority the Muslims suffered an ill fate, for while they secured for themselves power and prosperity through science, knowledge, industry, and good organisation, the Muslims were barred from all this. They laid the plans for this social turmoil in masterly fashion, invoking the aid of their political intellect and military might until they achieved their goal. They deluded the Muslim leaders by granting them loans and entering into financial transactions with them - An easy task which enabled them to infiltrate the economy and flood the country with their capital, their banks, and their companies; Thus they ran the economic machinery, exploiting the enormous profits and vast sums of money. All to the exclusion of the inhabitants. Hence, they were able to alter the basic principles of government, justice, and education, and infuse in the most powerful Islamic countries, their own peculiar political judicial, and cultural systems. They imported their semi-naked women into these regions, together with their liquors, their theatres, their dance halls, their amusements arcades, their stories, their newspapers, their novels, their whims, their silly games, and their vices. Here they allowed for crimes intolerable in their own countries, and beautified this tumultuous world to the deluded, naive eyes of wealthy Muslims and those of rank and authority. This was not enough for them, so they built schools and scientific cultural institutes, casting doubt and heresy within the hearts of people . They taught them how to demean themselves, to vilify their religion and their homeland, to detach themselves from their beliefs, and to regard anything Western as sacred, in the belief that only that which is European can be emulated. These schools were restricted to the upper class, the ruling body, the powerful and the future leaders. Those who were unsuccessful in such places were sent abroad to complete their studies. This drastic, well organised social campaign was tremendously successful since it appealed to the mind. It will continue to exert its strong intellectual influence over a long period of time. Thus, it was far more dangerous than any political or military campaign. Some Islamic countries went overboard in their admiration for the European civilisation and their dissatisfaction with the Islamic one, to the point that Turkey declared itself a non-Islamic state, imitating the Europeans in everything that they did. Aman Allah Khan, King of Afghanistan, tried this, but the attempt lost him his throne. In Egypt the manifestations of this mimicry increased and became so serious that one of the intellectual leaders could openly say that the only path to progress was to adopt this civilisation: good or evil, bitter or sweet, praise worthy or reprehensible. From Egypt it spread with strength and speed into the neighbouring countries, to the extent that it reached Morocco and encircled the holy sanctuaries within the midst of Hijaz. We may subdivide the Muslim nations that were affected by this materialistic civilisation, into three categories:

1) Countries in which this influence has reached serious proportions.

Not only is this seen outwardly but has gone so far as to penetrate the minds and feelings of the people. Among these countries are Turkey and Egypt, where the slightest trace of an Islamic ideology has disappeared from all walks of life, banished to mosques and Sufi retreats.

2) Countries which have only been influenced outwardly. Emotions and feelings However remaining intact. Such as Iran and North Africa.

3) Countries which have not been influenced by this civilisation, except for a particular class consisting of the

well educated and the ruling group, to the exclusion of the common people and the masses. Such as Syria, Iraq, the Hijaz, many sections of the Arabian Peninsula, and the remaining Muslim countries.

Nevertheless, this current is spreading with the speed of lightning reaching those it has not struck yet. The enemies of Islam can deceive Muslim intellectuals and draw a thick veil over the eyes of the zealous by depicting Islam as defective in various aspects of doctrine, ritual observance, and morality. What helps them to carry out this deception is the Muslims ignorance about the intrinsic nature of Islam, such that many of them are quite happy to accept the status quo. They have been ingrained in this for such along time now that it is difficult to explain to them that Islam is complete, social system encompassing all aspects of life.

Thus we can say that the Western civilisation, has triumphed over the Islamic civilisation in its social struggle. This has occurred on Muslim land, not only militarily but also spiritually and ideologically. Small wonder, for what is strong is wholly strong, and what is weak is wholly weak:

'These are the days which we apportion to mankind in turn.'

(Surat-aal-Imraan (3), ayah 140)

Even if the ideology and teachings of Islam have gone astray, it is powerful in its essential nature, full of life and vitality, attractive and enchanting in its splendour and beauty, and it will remain so because it is the truth, and human existence will never achieve perfection and virtue through any other means. It is the work of Allah and under his protection:

'Lo, We have sent down the Reminder, and lo, We are its Protector.'

(Surat-al-Hijr (15), ayah 9)

'God refuses ought but that He should perfect His light, though the unbelievers feel aversion'

(Surat-at-Tawbah (9), ayah 32)

Awakening: Just as political aggression had its effect in arousing nationalist feelings, so has social aggression in reviving the Islamic ideology. Voices have been raised in every land, demanding a return to Islam, an understanding of its precepts, and an application of its rules. The day must soon come when the walls of this materialistic civilisation will come down upon the heads of its inhabitants. Then their hearts and souls will burn with a spiritual hunger, but they will find no sustenance, no healing, no remedy, except in the teachings of this Noble Book:

'O man, an admonition from your Lord has come to you, and a healing for what is in your hearts, a guidance and a mercy for the believers. Say: 'In God's bounty, and in His mercy: let them rejoice in that.' It is better than what they hoard.'

(Surat-Yunus (10), ayah 58-59)

Our Mission is one of Reawakening and Deliverance

A Weighty Legacy

Thus dear Brothers, It is Allah's will that we are the inheritors of this legacy; no matter what the consequences, the light of your mission glows amidst this darkness; He has chosen you to exalt His Word, to bring back the Sharee'ah and re-establish His state:

'Allah will surely aid one who helps Him. Allah is Mighty, Glorious.'

(Surat-al-Hajj (22), ayah 40)

Our General Aims

What do we want, dear brothers? Do we seek temporary goals such as hoarding up wealth and becoming famous? Or do we want dominion over the earth?

'The earth is Allah's: He gives to inherit it those whom He will of His servants.'

(Surat-al-A'raaf (7), ayah 127)

Even as we read the Speech of Allah (SWT):

'That is the Abode of the Hereafter which We assign to those who do not want exaltation in the earth, nor any corruption. The final consequence is to the pious.'

(Surat-al-Qasas (28), ayah 83)

May Allah witness that we do not want any of these, that our work and our mission are not toward these ends. Rather always bear in mind that you have two fundamental goals:

1) Freeing the Islamic homeland from all foreign authority, for this is a natural right belonging to every human being which only the unjust oppressor will deny.

2) The establishment of an Islamic state within this homeland, which acts according to the precepts of Islam, applies its social regulations, advocates its sound principles, and broadcasts its mission to all of mankind. For as long as this state does not emerge, every Muslim is sinning. and is responsible before Allah the Almighty for the failure and slackness in establishing it. In these bewildering circumstances, it is against the interests of humanity that a state advocating injustice and oppression should arise, while there should be no one at all working for the advent of a state founded on truth, justice, and peace. We want to accomplish these two goals in the Nile Valley and the Arab kingdom, and in every land which Allah has blessed with the Islamic creed: uniting all the Muslims.

Our Specific Aims

Apart from these two aims, we have some specific aims, If they are not accomplished our society cannot become wholly Islamic. Dear brothers, recall that more than sixty percent of the Egyptians live at a subhuman level. Only through the most arduous toil do they get enough to eat. Egypt is threatened by murderous famines and exposed to many economic problems, the outcome of which only Allah can know. Recall too that there are more than 320 foreign companies in Egypt, monopolising all the public utilities and important facilities in every sector of the country; the wheels of commerce, industry, and all economic institutions are in the hands of profiteering foreigners; our wealth in land is being transferred with lightning speed from our hands to those of others. Recall also that, out of the entire civilised world, Egypt is subject to the most diseases, plagues, and illness; over 90 percent of the Egyptian people are threatened by physical infirmity, the loss of some sensory perception, and a variety of sicknesses and ailments; Egypt is still backward, with no more than one fifth of the population possessing any form of education, and of these more than one hundred thousand have never gone further than the primary school level. Recall that crime has doubled in Egypt, and that it is increasing at an alarming rate to the point that there are more people coming out of prisons than schools; that up to the present time Egypt has been unable to properly outfit a single army division; These symptoms and phenomena may be observed in any Islamic country. Amid your aims are to work in reforming education; to fight poverty, ignorance, disease, and crime; and to create an exemplary society deserving to be associated with the Islamic Sharee'ah.

Our General Means

How will we arrive at these goals? Speeches, announcements, letters, lessons, lectures, a diagnosis of the ailment and a prescription of the medicine. All these by themselves are useless and will never achieve, nor help achieve a single aim. Nevertheless, every mission has an approach which it must adopt and act accordingly. it remains invariable and unchanging, and is confined to the following three matters:

1) Deep faith.

2) Precise organisation

3) Uninterrupted work.

This is our general approach dear brothers, so have conviction in your ideology, rally around it and work steadfastly for it.

Further Measures

Besides this general approach, there may be further measures that have to be adopted and strictly adhered to. They may have both positive and negative aspects to them, either in compatibility with man's customary habits or in stark contradiction. Some are mild while others are rigorous, so we must train ourselves and prepare to face all this in order to guarantee success. We may be asked to break old customs and habits, to conform to unfamiliar backgrounds and settings. For in reality our mission is to change that which is prevailing and conventional. Are you prepared for this, dear brothers?

Discouragement

Many people will say: What do these measures mean? How can they build a nation or maintain a society burdened with such chronic problems and sunk in a welter of corruption? How will you manage the economy on a non profit basis? how will you respond to the woman question? How will you obtain your rights without the use of force?

Dear brothers, know that Satan slips his devilish bid into the aspirations of every reformer, but Allah cancels out what Satan whispers; then Allah decrees His miracles, for Allah is Knowing, Wise. Remind these people that history teaches us lessons about past and contemporary nations; Any nation determined to live cannot possibly die.

Obstacles in Our Path

I would like to admit to you that frankly your mission is still unknown to many people, and the day they find out about it and grasp its potential and objectives, you will face stern opposition and sharp hostility. Your way will be riddled with hardship and obstacles. Only then will you be following the path of those who convey the message. For the moment you are still unknown, simply preparing for the call and getting ready for the struggle that lies ahead of you. The ignorance of the people as to what constitutes true Islam will remain an obstacle in your path, and you will find among the religious body and the official scholars those who will regard your understanding of Islam as outlandish, denouncing your campaign. Chiefs, leaders, and men of rank and authority will hate you. Every government without exception will rise against you, each one trying to limit your activities and hinder your path.

The oppressors will use all the mechanisms to oppose you and extinguish the light of your mission. To that end they will invoke the aid of weak governments, dirty tactics and the help of those who seek their affection, while displaying animosity towards you. They will arouse suspicion and unjust accusations about your mission, trying to endow it with every possible defect and displaying it before the people in the most repugnant possible guise. They will rely on their strength, authority, wealth and influence.

'They desire to extinguish Allah's light with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light though the unbelievers be averse to it.'

(Surat-as-Saff (61), ayah 68)

Without a doubt, you will experience trials and tribulations, you will be imprisoned, arrested, deported, and persecuted. Your goods will be confiscated, your employment suspended, and your homes will be searched. This period of trial may last a long time:

'Do men imagine that they will be left to say: "We believe", and that they will not be put to the test?'

(Surat-al-'Ankabut (29), ayah 2)

Allah has promised you with the success of the mujaahideen and the reward of sincere workers:

'O ye who believe, shall I show you a commerce that will save you from a painful chastisement ?... Then We sustained those who believed against their enemy, and they became victorious.'

(Surat-as-Saff (61), ayah 10 and 14)

Are you resolved to be Allah's helpers ?

The Factors for Success

Dear brothers, as we face these obstacles, it is only fitting that we remember we are conveying the loftiest of messages - that of Allah; that we are advocating the most powerful system - The Islamic ideology; and that we are offering to mankind the most just law - The Sacred Law of the Qur'an:

'The religion of Allah and what is better than Allah religion.'

(Surat-al-Baqarah (2), ayah 138)

Surely the entire world is in need of this message, which is smoothing out and preparing the world to take this path, Allah be praised, we are free from personal ambition and far from seeking internal advantage. We seek nothing but Allah's Face and the welfare of mankind. We only work to seek his pleasure. We look forward to Allah's support and help, for he whom Allah helps cannot be overcome:

'That is because Allah is the defender of those who believe, and because the unbelievers have no defender.'

(Surat-Muhammad (47), ayah 11)

The strength of our call and the need for it, the nobility of our goals and Allah's support for us are all the factors leading to success. Nothing can stand in its path:

'And Allah has the upper hand in His affairs, but most of mankind do not know.'

(Surat-Yusuf (12), ayah 21)

Sincere Advice

Fellow Muslims, listen !

Through these words, I wished to clarify to you your ideology. For it is possible that critical times await us, and the communication between me and you will be cut off for a while so that I may not be able to speak or write to you. Therefore I advise you to ponder over these words carefully, learn them by heart if you can, and accept them whole-heartedly. For behind every word lie manifold meanings.

Dear brothers, you are not a welfare organisation, nor a political party, nor a local association with strictly limited aims. Rather you are a new spirit making its way into the heart of this nation - reviving it with the Qur'an; a new light dawning, dispelling the darkness of materialism through the knowledge of Allah; a resounding voice rising high - echoing the message of the Apostle (PBUH). In truth and without being excessive, you should feel that you are the bearers of a burden the rest of mankind has shrugged off. If someone asks you: "To what are you calling?" Say: "We are calling you to Islam, which was brought by Muhammad (PBUH): Government is part of it, freedom is a religious obligation." If someone should say to you: "This is politics!" Say: This is Islam, and we do not recognise such divisions.

If someone should say to you: "You are advocates of revolution!" say: "We are advocates of truth and peace - we believe and take pride in this. If you rise up against us and stand in the path of our mission, Allah has permitted us to defend ourselves, and you will be the unjust rebels." If they say to you: "You are asking the help

of individuals and associations!" say: "We believe in Allah alone, and reject that which you were associating with Him." If they persist in their hostility, say: ‘Peace be unto you! We have no desire for the ignorant." (Surat-al-Qasas (28), ayah 55)

Duties

Dear brothers believe in Allah, exalt His presence, depend and rely upon Him, Fear no one but Him, stand in awe of no other than Him. Perform that which He has made obligatory and shun that which He has forbidden.

Model yourselves on excellence and hold fast to perfection. Have a strong moral character and live up to the honour that Allah has gifted the Muslims and the nobility of the pious.

Draw near to the Qur’an and study it, devote yourselves to the Life of the Prophet, taking counsel from it. Be active workers rather than wranglers, for when Allah bestows His guidance on a people He inspires them to work; And people do not go astray after receiving guidance, except when they give into disputation.

Love one another, and make sure you guard your unity, for this is the secret of your strength and the buttress of your success. Stand fast until Allah judges justly between you and your people, for He is the best of Judges.

Listen, and obey your leaders both in duress and comfort, in good times and bad, for this is the token of your conviction and the bond of solidarity between you.

Finally, look forward to Allah's aid and His support. This opportunity will arise, without a doubt:

‘And then the believers will rejoice in Allah's aid. He aids whom He will, and He is the Mighty, the Merciful.’

(Surat-ar-Rum (30), ayah 4)

May Allah grant both of us success in that which He loves and approves, and steer us on the path of those who are good and rightly guided; may He make us live like the glorious and the fortunate, and grant us the death of martyrs and those who have striven in jihad. For He is the best of Defenders, and the best of helpers.
